

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the Town of Owego Fire District has been awarded \$98,280 in federal grant funding to help purchase 23 new Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units that ensure firefighters have breathable air when entering dangerous environments. The funding is provided through the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program (AFG) and is administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"The members of the Town of Owego Fire District deserve the very best equipment to ensure they remain as safe as possible," said Hinchey. "The Self Contained Breathing Apparatus units the fire district will purchase with this grant will help do just that. I have been, and will continue to be, a staunch supporter of the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program, because I know how important it is to stand up for those who serve our communities. These everyday heroes put their lives on the line to rescue those in harm's way. This funding will help lessen the risks they face and spare local taxpayers from having to shoulder the entire expense of these units."

"The grant will allow the Town of Owego Fire District to upgrade its 26 Self Contained Breathing Apparatus units to meet the 2013 standards," said Walt Jones, Chairman of the Town of Owego Fire District. "The upgraded units provide air supply indicators, bailout capabilities and other required upgrades. The grant, combined with matching funds from the fire district, will provide our firefighters with the safest SCBAs available."

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey has worked to secure full funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program since its inception in 2001. Since the fire grant program started, nearly \$20 million in grants have been awarded to fire and emergency departments in the congressional district Hinchey represents.

Hinchey has sponsored a number of workshops across his congressional district to help fire departments successfully navigate the grant application process. Hinchey is also the author of the SERVE (Supporting Emergency Responders' Volunteer Efforts) Act, which would provide a \$1,000 federal tax credit to individuals who are active members of volunteer firefighting and EMS organizations. For the most current information regarding the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, please visit [www.fema.gov/firegrants](http://www.fema.gov/firegrants).